

PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS AND ETHICS

JOMC 141-002

SUMMER I – 2015

Class Hours: Monday-Friday -- 9:45-11:15 AM

Classroom: Halls of Fame – Carroll 128

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Office Hours: Tues: 9:00-9:45 AM,
Thurs: 11:15 AM-12:00 PM
or by appointment

Course Goals and Objectives

Welcome to JOMC 141. We're here to critically engage with important issues facing every single one of us as both consumers and producers of mass media. Media professionals talk a lot about doing the right thing, but they're constantly criticized for ethical and moral shortcomings. In this class, we will discuss the ethical dilemmas that confront professionals in print and broadcast news, advertising, public relations, photojournalism, and more. We will examine codes of ethics for each of these professions and evaluate how these guidelines have and have not been applied in specific settings. In the end, this course is designed to familiarize you with the tools needed to make ethical decisions regarding the use of the mass media and to help you develop a personal yardstick by which to measure your own ethical decisions.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Integrate ethical foundations and apply those ideas to professional situations;
- Critically analyze current mass communication professional practices through reading and discussing communication topics found in trade journals and other media;
- Compare ethical standards of mass communication professions and examine how similarities and differences help or hinder their professional relationships;
- Develop, defend and apply your own set of guidelines to tackle ethical situations.

You'll get out of this course what you put into it. Your success will depend upon your willingness to keep up with the readings, participate in class, and keep an open mind when dealing with issues and others' opinions.

Required Texts and Readings

Media Ethics: Issues and Cases, 8th edition by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins. The textbook will be supplemented with other readings, which you may access via Sakai. All assigned readings should be completed before the appropriate class sessions for which they are assigned to ensure that you're ready to discuss, ask questions, offer opinions, disagree, argue, share knowledge, etc.

In addition, you should be following major news as it happens. Current events and how the media covers them will be the source of many of our discussions. Whether you watch CNN or read Gawker, you should be thinking about what constitutes news and how stories unfold. You are also encouraged to bring in questions about media coverage of current events or post them on Sakai.

Here are a few sites that frequently post about ethical issues in the media. You should check these sites on a regular basis:

- **Poynter Institute (poynter.org)**
- **Columbia Journalism Review (cjr.org)**
- **MediaShift (pbs.org/mediashift)**
- **Nieman Report (niemanreports.org)**
- **PR Week (prweek.com)**
- **Advertising Age (adage.com)**
- **Mr. Media Training (mrmediatraining.com)**

Courtesy

This is a course about ethics, meaning there are few black-and-white rules that we won't challenge and pick apart. This means your voice and opinion are very important. We will often be discussing difficult and controversial ethical issues. Please respect the opinions of your fellow students. We are here to challenge our assumptions and learn from each other.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. Learning in this course is a participatory process. You are permitted three absences. You do not have to notify me of your reasons for your absences, nor do you have to provide a doctor's note or any other note. Use your absences wisely. If you know you need to be absent for university-related activities or other obligations, be sure to factor those into your absences. For each class you miss after three, your final grade will be lowered by three points. For example, if your grade is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be altered to a C+ (78). No absence after your three allowed absences will be excused for any reason, so you are strongly encouraged to save your permitted absences for when you really need them. Additionally, no matter how high your grade is otherwise, students who miss more than six classes cannot earn an A or B in the class. Arriving on time is a courtesy to your fellow classmates. Repeated tardiness (10 min or more) will affect your attendance and participation grade.

Late Work

All homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period. Late work will receive 10% off for the first day. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – a grade of F will be recorded. You're responsible for turning in all projects on the dates they're due, even if you're absent that day. In-class assignments are just that – we'll work on them in class and you will turn them in when class ends. Missing an in-class assignment constitutes a zero for that item and cannot be made up if you are absent.

Laptops and Cell Phones

Laptops are permitted in class; however, I reserve the right to ask you to close your laptops during presentations or other class discussions. You are expected to use your laptop only to take notes for class or look up examples that we are discussing in class. Other use (including email, Facebook, etc.) may result in my asking you to leave your laptop at home. Cell phones should be set on silent or turned off and left in your backpack, please. If I see you inappropriately using your cell phone or laptop (even if I don't disrupt class to say something to you), it will be reflected in your participation grade.

Discussions/Participation

We have the advantage of a smaller class size compared to most JOMC 141 sections. Therefore, I am expecting more active participation from everyone. We will start every class with 3-4 short discussions (10-15 minutes per topic) led by a student and based on current ethical issues in the media. The discussion leader is responsible for posting **one or two short articles** on the Sakai forum by **5:00 pm the day before their presentation** to familiarize everyone with their topic. Discussion leaders will not need to prepare a formal presentation. This will be an informal discussion about the ethical issues you present. Each student will be discussion leader **twice** this semester. Your performance as discussion leader will factor into your participation grade.

Here are criteria I follow for determining the participation portion of the grade (25%).

- A students participate in most of the class discussions in almost every class period (or try to participate by raising their hands often when questions are asked). They contribute interesting and/or thought-provoking ideas and occasionally bring in outside material relevant to the class and to the readings. They don't talk simply to hear their own voices, and they do not take over the discussion, but let others have a turn. They've probably asked some interesting questions along the way. And they arrive to class on time and do not miss classes.
- B students participate in some of the class discussions each week, but not at quite the same level and/or comments are not always as insightful as the A students. However, they still have some interesting things to say or questions to ask whether in class or online. They may have no absences and they arrive to class on time.

- C students may participate in class or online from time to time but mostly prefer to lurk. They may have had some pretty good things to say but just don't speak up/contribute online very often. They may have no absences or perhaps they have more than they should. They may be tardy on occasion
- D and F students have barely said anything all semester whether in class or online, or even if they have contributed occasionally, they might have too many absences. They are mostly lurkers even if they have fairly good attendance. They tend to respond only when called on. They may or may not have arrived to most classes on time.

Exams

- Two exams will test your understanding of the material covered in lectures, assigned readings, and class presentations. Exams will include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching and short-essay questions. The final exam will test your knowledge of the material from the entire semester. (25% each)

Ethics in the News Presentation

- You'll be responsible for selecting an ethical issue in the media. These should be broader in scope than the daily discussions. You'll make an in-depth (15-20 minutes) presentation to class to explain that situation in light of the theories we'll be discussing in class. (25%)

Grading:

Your final grade in this course will be based on the following assignments and percentages:

- **Participation – 25%** (includes assignments, attendance, contributing to class discussion)
- **Midterm Exam – 25%**
- **Ethics in the Media Presentation – 25%**
- **Final Exam – 25%**

You will be graded in this class based on professional standards. That includes not just the quality of the work you turn in but also the way you conduct yourself in the classroom. The grade break down is as follows:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82

C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	59 or below

So what do those grades actually mean?:

“A” Mastery of course content at the highest level that can be reasonably be expected of students at a given state of development. The “A” grade states clearly that the student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study that he/she may be strongly encouraged to continue.

“B” Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The “B” grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.

“C” A totally acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The “C” grade states that, while not yet showing any unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.

“D” A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The “D” grade states that the student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field.

“F” For whatever reasons, an unacceptable performance. The “F” grade indicates that the student’s performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content.

Honor Code

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we are all responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student, is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is

expected, and it is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code. For more information about the Honor Code, visit <http://honor.unc.edu>.

Diversity

The University's policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined here: <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/intro.html>. In summary, UNC does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or disabilities.

Harassment

UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, dos@unc.edu or 919.966.4042.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know before the end of the second week of class. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu> or call 919.962.8300. If you need assistance or services from the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD please contact them at 919-962-7227 or <http://www.unc.edu/asp/>.

Core Competencies

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates of schools of journalism and mass communication should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Course Outline

Here is a class-by-class breakdown of our schedule this semester. I reserve to right to adjust the schedule as necessary and will notify students of any changes as soon as possible.

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Week 1		
5/13	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting to know each other Syllabus review Starting to think about ethics
5/14	Philosophical Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 1 (Sakai) “What American Think About Ethics” “Ethical Communication” “Aristotle’s Golden Mean” “Building Blocks” DUE: “Dead White Guys Exercise”
5/15	Decision Making Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potter Box chart “Building Blocks” “Facebook bows...” “Boston blasts show...”
Week 2		
5/18	Truth and Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 2 “Rethinking Objectivity”
5/19	Clients and Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 3 “What the ad doesn’t tell you”
5/20	Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 4 “TARES test”
5/21	Professional Codes and Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAF, NPPA, PRSA, RTDNA, & SPJ Codes of Ethics
5/22	Privacy, Media and Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 5 & 6
Week 3		
5/25	Memorial Day – No Class	
5/26	Review Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review for Midterm
5/27	Midterm Exam	
5/28	Media Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 7
5/29	Ethics of Visual Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 8 Disaster Photography in Age of Social Media”
Week 4		
6/1	New Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ethics, Chapter 9
6/2	Free Speech on the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA

	Guest Speaker: Brooks Fuller	
6/3	Entertainment Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Ethics, Chapter 10 & 11
6/4	Sports Journalism Guest Speaker: Dr. Sada Reed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA
6/5	Case Study: Rolling Stone and UVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape on Campus (Original RS article) • Columbia SOJ Report
Week 5 – Presentation Week		
6/8	Student Presentations	
6/9	Student Presentations	
6/10	Student Presentations	
6/11	Student Presentations	
6/12	Student Presentations	
Week 6		
6/15	Review day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for Final
6/16	Reading Day – No Class	
6/17	Final Exam - 8:00 – 11:00 AM	